



Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona
José de Jesus Rivera

PRESS RELEASE

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For Information Contact Public Affairs
(602) 514-7561

CORNFIELDS MAN SENTENCED TO 16 MONTHS FOR INVOLUNTARY MANSLAUGHTER

PHOENIX, ARIZONA -- José de Jesus Rivera, United States Attorney for the District of Arizona announced today that **MELVIN SHIRLEY**, of Cornfields, Arizona, was sentenced to 16 months imprisonment, the maximum penalty, for the Involuntary Manslaughter of Jameson Begay. He was also ordered to pay restitution to the victim's family for funeral and other related expenses.

SHIRLEY previously pleaded guilty and admitted that on June 2, 1998, he was driving, under the influence of alcohol, on Navajo Route 15 with the victim riding in the front seat. Two additional male passengers were riding in the back seat. The defendant and the passengers consumed beer and wine during the course of the day and were on their way to a bootlegger's house to purchase more alcohol when the defendant's car left the road and crashed. Jameson Begay was killed instantly. Elie Joe, who was riding in the back seat, was hospitalized for one months with a dislocated hip and elbow. Ben Tsosie was also riding in the back seat and sustained minor injuries.

The investigation preceding the indictment was conducted by Daryl Boye, Navajo Nation Criminal Investigator, Window Rock District. The prosecution was handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Diane Humetewa, District of Arizona, Phoenix, Arizona.

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